Mrs, Edna Cobb
12295 4th Street, Apt.27
Yucaipa, CA. 92399

Dear Mrs. Cobb,

Enclosed is a copy of the trancript of the interview which Patricia Young did with you. The tape of the interview has been transcribed and edited. However, because of such factors as technical difficulties, or the editor;s lack of acquaintance with local terms or dialects, there thereertain to be errors..As the interviewee , you are the best person qualified to correct these errors. Please pay special attention to the spelling of persons' names and the names of places.

In reading the transcript you should be aware that the spoken word almost always appears somewhat "folksy" when it is converted to a written copy. However, because much of the value of these transcripts lies in their informal tone,you should avoid the temptation to make them appear scholarly.

Your transcript has been edited by someone who has deleted false starts and made minor corrections. If you wich to amplify any portion of your remarks, you are encouraged todo this.
It is best to put additions of more than a few words on a separate page and make a notation on the transcipt where this amplification is to be inserted.

As you correct each page, please initial it at the bottom. This will indicate that you have seen each page and made any desired corrections. In any of your markings, please use a blue pen or pencil.

We are also enclosing a biogrphical form. Please fill it out and return it with your transcript as soon as possible. A stamped addressed envelope is enclosed.

Thank you for your assistance. We hope you will be pleased with the final results.

Sincerely yours,

Museum Aide

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

O. H. 101

EDNA COBB

Interviewed by

Patricia Young

February 1, 1980

INTERVIEWEE: EDNA COBB

INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young

SUBJECT:

DATE: 1 February 1980

TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

Y: This is an interview with Edna Cobb for the Historical Society of Palm Desert Oral History Project. The date is February 1, 1980. It's two o'clock in the afternoon. The interview is taking place at Mrs. Cobb's home in Yucaipa.

We can talk a little about Cathedral City and the time that you and your husband spent there. How did you happen to come?

C: Mr. Cobb's father and mother went to the desert to spend part of a winter there in 1927, and they fell in love with the desert and they went back to their grocery store in Los Angeles and spent the winter of 19 . . . they spent the rest of the winter of 1927. Then they went to come down to Cathedral City and bought property there. And the post office was coming into Cathedral City. It had not been established yet, but in 1927 or 1928 near the end of one year and the forepart of the

other year, and that was in 1928, it was completed. And they left. Mrs. Cobb, Mother Cobb could not take to escape the hot weather. So they went back to Los Angeles. And Mr. Cobb and I had been on a trip back to Nebraska. And when we returned to Los Angeles, why they wanted us to come down and take over the store. And we had a store, a grocery store. We lived behind the grocery store in a small apartment. The gas station was out in front. They had the post office, we had the little grocery store, and we had the gas station. And that was in the year of 1929. First time I had ever been in the desert. And to go into this desert the first day of July, right out of the city where I had lived most of my life, and to take this desert, it took ten days for me to know that it was not going to kill me. I don't know whether I was disappointed or happy about it, but nevertheless, we stuck it out. So we stayed there. Mr. and Mrs. Cobb, Father and Mother Cobb, went back to Los Angeles, and Mr. Cobb and I stayed there. And in the meantime, we had in our grocery store one of our very favorite customers was a Mr. Everett DeVall, who now owns property which is now part of the Tamarsk Country Club. And he interested Mr. Cobb in buying ten acres of

raw desert land. In the summertime, Mr. Cobb went out with a shovel and an ax and rubbed greasewood off of ten acres so that we could get it out to dates and grapefruits. And I stayed in the post office and grocery store. I was afraid, I was all alone, I didn't know too much about the desert, and in the daytime while he was gone most of my customers was Indians or Mexicans and I was afraid of all of them. But, anyway, we stuck it out. Finally in later years we lost both Mr. and Mrs. Cobb, they passed away. Mr. Cobb and I stayed in the desert from 1929 up until 1988, when we moved to Yucaipa. And that's where Mr. Cobb passed away. Oh, but there are so many things to say about the desert and to tell of the early days, that some are very, very funny. We had a man come down and camped back about, oh, four or five blocks, perhaps out of the market. And one day while Mr. Cobb was away, he come in and wanted to buy a quart of blood. Well, I become very, very frightened, and finally I got him out of the store. He bought a little gasoline and he went away. When Mr. Cobb came home, I told him of my experience and everyone that come in the store and the gas station, I told them. Well, they thought I, that woman down there at that gas station

is having hallucinations, but anyway, before the evening came about and my husband was home, this man come back again. So my husband went out and he discovered that Old John was not all there. But anyway Old John went back up to his camp, and in the middle of the night, why some of the neighbors come down right into the store. We had the only telephone in Cathedral City at the time, wanted to telephone to the sheriff that Old John was running around with a shotgun and he was going to shoot somebody. So nevertheless, we phoned in to the sheriff and the sheriff come down and picked Mr. John up. Come to find out that he'd escaped from the asylum in Salem, Oregon. He had stole the automobile and had got as far as the desert. He was returned to Oregon, so the authorities told me later. And that was one of my experiences in the desert. And another very interesting thing that happened, we lived quite close to Cathedral Canyon and there was many, many people in that day and age at that time hiked back into Cathedral City. They went there to take pictures and to climb the rocks and things like that. Well, somebody come rushing down to tell us and Mr. Cobb that there was a dead man up there. So the only way they had to get the body out was to go

in and carry the body out. Well, we had one boy there by the name of George Lafayette who had had tuberculosis and was not strong. There was Mr. Cobb, George Lafayette and a neighbor, three men went up to carry that body out, which they did. And after they got down, why then the authorities went bottom of the hill and took the body out. And then things went very quietly. And we were there in the desert until, as I say, until 1987.

Y: You mean 1977?

C: And we sold our business and moved out of the desert. I don't know what else to tell you.

Y: Where was your business?

C: In Cathedral City.

Y: Where, located in . . .

C: It's where the, there's a parking lot there now, but it was between the Standard station, and I still own the grounds, three lots where the Standard station is. And it was two lots the other side of that. It is where the parking lot next to it is where the, it used to be a market and I don't know just what is in there now, but there's some business occupies it. Standard Oil Company, of course, is still there.

Y: How many people were in Cathedral City when you first come down?

C: When we first went to Cathedral City, there was a Mr. Martin, an old German gentleman, and he was a gentleman, a very, very fine, fine man, principles was great by which he lived by. Then there was George Washington lived there also. And then I think the same year that we went there a man from Austria came. I can't remember just what his name was

but there was George Washington, Mr. Cobb and I and Mr. Martin, and a family by the name of Dye, Rudy Dye, and a family by the name of Humpleton, stayed there most of the summer, but they left in July and August to get out of that extreme heat. And we stayed in. Then in 19 . . . that would be in 1929, in 1930 and 1931, we stayed in the desert. And when the pines to Palm's Highway was built, why, and when that road was completed they went up to the Idyllwild Mountains and spent all their summers up there until recent years. And we had sold our property up there which was at Thomas Mountain. We had a cabin on the north end of the subdivision of Thomas Mountain, the last house in the subdivision. It would be going toward Idyllwild from the desert on Palm's Highway.

Y: I don't understand, you said you, most of your customers early on were either Indians or Mexicans.

C: That was in the early days. That was just in the summertime.

Y: Because there were no other people around

C: Excepting those four families, that's George Washington, Mr. Martin, Rudy Dyes and Mr. Cobb and I were practically the only ones that stayed in the summertime. And then July and August, why even Mr. Dye and that family, they used to go up, I think they went up Tom Canyon somewhere and they went back in some of the canyons there and spent their summers. Then later I don't think they ever went up to White Water. I don't remember of them going up to White Water, but Mr. and Mrs. did spend a couple of summers on the Banning-Idyllwild Road. Mr. worked for the County and was connected with highway, the County Highway Department. They lived up there for a couple of, stayed up there a couple of summers on the camp up towards Idyllwild

Y: When they stayed in the canyon, did they have a trailer or something, or they just camped out for the summer?

C: They just camped out. They had a tent and they just camped out for the summer.

Y: That's the first time I've heard of anyone taking advantage of the canyons that way for the summer.

C: Yes. See, down there was water there. Now that was quite an item to have water in the canyon. There's no water in Cathedral Canyon, but there was water in Palm Canyon.

Y: What were the roads like then?

C: The roads, just a dirt road, just a dirt road. There was a little strip between what would be Indian Wells in Indio that was paved, a little strip in there that was blacktopped. The rest of the road was all just scrabble, just dusty and hot.

Y: Did you go down to Indio much

C: Sometimes we'd have occasion to go there, but we never made a practice of going to Indio. No, we stayed right here. Why we spent many summers on Vancouver Island at a place called Camel River on Vancouver Island. And we spent, oh, a good many summers in Eugene, Oregon. And for ten years we spent our summers in Yellowstone National Park. We belonged to a club and they called it the Yellowstone Club, and for ten years, why, we went there I think there was ten trailers. Some was from New York State and more from Illinois and the

central states around like that, Illinois and Wisconsin, Michigan. And the rest would all be from California.

Y: Besides the summers, were there a growing number of people in the thirties that were coming to spend their winters in Cathedral?

C: Well, yes, there were a good many.

Y: How about the winter of 1930? Was that the first winter you were there?

C: The winter of 1929 was the first winter were were here.

Y: Were there many people?

C: Well, to us, all that it would accommodate at that time. Then they started, oh, let's see, I don't know just what year they did start, it did start to boom. Whenever Palm Springs started growing rapidly, why, of course, things around Cathedral City grew to a certain extent.

Y: Where did people live at that time?

C: We lived back of the store.

Y: And other people?

C: Oh, other people?

Y: Was there just individual homes at that point?

C: Oh, yes, there was homes south of the boulevard and north of the boulevard. There were homes scattered all around Cathedral City. And then we bought in late years, for

the last twenty-five years, we had, our home was over, our land bordered on the Tamarsk Country Club. And that's where we lived for about twenty-five years, twenty-seven years to be exact. And then we just moved, we sold and this is . . . We sold about May 2, I think, or ninety-seven. Well, this is ninety- eight, isn't it?

Y: This is 1980.

C: 1980, yes. Well, we sold eighty, we sold in 1977, 1978, yes, we sold our ranch in 1977.

Y: That was the ten acres you'd bought from Mr. . . . Duvall?

C: No, then we bought all the land. We had forty acres there that we sold at one time. Then when we sold our home there, why our house sat on an acre. We sold everything but five acres, and we kept those five acres and we sold it, or we built our house on an acre. And then we finally sold the rest of it, and they put a condominium in there. And it's right on the golf course, it shut us off from the golf course.

Y: So you watched Tamarsk Country Club grow then?

C: Oh, yes. We saw it built and saw it go from desert to what it is today.

Y: Did Mr. Devall have a ranch there?

C: Mr. Devall?

Y: Did he have a ranch where Tamarsk is now or was it just

C: Some of the younger Devalls have a ranch out there, and it's between the country club, north of there. What do they call it? That beautiful, beautiful country club out there.

Y: Thunderbird?

C: No, no, no, it's north of that.

Y: Mission Hills, is that out there?

C: What hills?

Y: Mission Hills.

C: Mission Hills, it is south of Mission Hills. It's south of Mission Hills. And we owned forty acres in there. Ours didn't go as far north as Mission Hills, but Mr. Devall's property went that far. And then from the corner of Frank Sinatra Drive and Devall Road, and he sold that. Mr. Devall come here when there was nothing out there, nothing at all. He put down the first well in that whole area there. He come up in Imperial Valley and bought this section of land. Of course, I suppose he didn't give much for it.

Y: Did he live on the land or was he just . . .

C: Oh, no, I wouldn't live out there, but I did in later

years after we built our home there. Our home was . . . I wonder where I got those pictures. I got them out the other day for one. The house was to be twenty-three hundred square feet there, and I couldn't get help. You get somebody to come in and first thing you'd miss this or you'd miss that. And they wouldn't wash windows or they wouldn't do this or they wouldn't do that, you know, and so we couldn't get domestic help so we just sold.

Y: Did you ever have help with the store when you had it?

C: Oh, yes. Mrs. Larrison used to work for us. And then we owned that Standard station and we run that, we still do. Mr. Cobb used to pay to run the station. He always had someone else run it for him, but we had that station there for years. And then I was postmaster from 1927. Oh, gee, when did I, did we leave? However, I did get my appointment. I've got a picture of that around here somewhere, all signed by Postmaster General. It's packed away somewhere and we moved, we moved out of our home into a little place like this. I didn't have room. A lot of things I kept, but I don't remember the date when it was. But I was postmaster for many, many years in Cathedral City.

Y: So you really watched it grow.

C: Oh, yes.

Y: It had gambling in there at one point, didn't it?

C: Yes, yes, they did. It was known as the One Thirty-nine Club. And it was run very, of course, it was against the law, but they had protection from Riverside County, the authorities. And, of course, money under the table. We can't prove those things, but we knew it. We knew what was going on. We never reported them. We have had, I don't want this repeated.

Y: I'm going to turn it off. And that's not related to the Dunes Club on Palm Drive.

C: No, it burned down.

Y: Oh.

C: Who run that now? Oh, they have a beautiful home just south of the El Mirador Hotel, one of those great big houses and big estates, big, almost half a lot in there, just south of the El Mirador. And what was his name? He owns the clubs. He owns One Thirty-nine and the Dunes Club. The Dunes Club used to be out north of Cathedral, what is now Cathedral Canyon Drive. Then it was just a road running out into the desert. And that burned down. The man that run that's name was Saucer, Earl Saucer. And then Earl Saucer died and Walter Melrose took it

over. And Walter Melrose owns, his widow owns, from the wash, well, from the edge of Cathedral City, he owns several sections of land in there. We owned the section down where Raymar is, Mr. Cobb and I, and Mrs. Hillery owned that whole section there, the section of Raymar and it comes in like you put two quarters together, and like this was Cathedral City, well, Raymar would come in like this, see, coming onto this corner. This section is the section where Cathedral City is. Well, if this section was Cathedral City, why then this section here would be where Raymar is the other side of the mountains here is Raymar and the highway is over here. And you'd go down around the corner and go by Raymar and all those things down there. Where the big restaurant is. I can't think of, well, anyway, what is it? Marie Callendar Restaurant.

Y: Yes.

C: And all those places down there. That was on our section of land that we owned in there.

Y: Was that considered part of Cathedral City?

C: Oh, no, no, no, no, that's county. Cathedral City just goes the other side of Cathedral Canyon Drive, goes to that. I think there's a, oh, maybe there would be a half a block. No, no, it comes in right where Cathedral Canyon

Drive. No, that isn't Cathedral Canyon; that's Date Palm Drive. And Date Palm Drive, that section in there, belonged to the railroad originally. And who owns it now? Oh, I believe it's in Indian land. It's Indian, that section in there is Indian. You see, when this was subdivided years and years and years ago, here comes your railroad. We'll say this is the valley. When they built the railroad down here, this was all Indian reservation. All right, they gave the Indians six miles here, see, down through the valley going parallel with the railroad. They give all this land in here to the Indians for the privilege of building the railroad here on the Indian land. And I don't think the Indians own any land over the other side of the railroad. I think all their land is just this, and when you come for your section line up here like that, suppose this was, what's our line goes through Cathedral City, Road, no, not Ramon, Cathedral, what do they call . . . a hundred and eleven.

Y: Oh, 111, Highway 111?

C: Now wait a minute.

Y: That runs right through the middle.

C: Yes, that would be the middle. But it was south of Ramon Road. Now if this was Ramon Road, then the Palm Springs city limits, of course, they come east, but anyway, and

they've included a lot of land in here or else this section here would be Indian, and this section here would be railroad. I don't know just how, I've kind of forgotten how that was.

Y: Had that all taken place by the time . . .

C: But the Indians, now you see, you could lease Indian land but you can't buy it. Oh, I know what I started to tell you. Then, oh, every other section the railroad kept, see.

Y: Yes.

C: See, this was the Indian and this was the railroad, and the railroad goes, no, it doesn't go north of the track. I would be clear to the railroad track. They would own certain sections of land in there if it was of a Z shape, if this was the railroad and the land come here, and this was your sectional lines, why whoever Indians would own this in her or else the railroad would still own it. Six miles south of the railroad.

Y: Was the railroad there when you moved?

C: Oh, yes, that's railroad has been in here for years and years. That railroad was through there before Salton Sea was ever Salton Sea. Salton Sea was caused from, they had built a dam, here's the Colorado River, well,

now, listen, Colorado can run water but it shouldn't move my river. Comes along down here like this. Now say this was the U. S. border, all right, the river come down and then they had this state canal come around out of the river, come down into old Mexico and come back up into California, the valley down here. The farmers instead of paying old Mexico to get the water, he went down into old Mexico and up into the state. Instead of paying them for the water, the farmers put a thing across here like that and its broke and all the Colorado River before they could get a dam in there and stop this water from coming in here in their dam which it both took out a lot of land and stuff and made a great big practically a river coming into Salt and Sea. But that's what forms Salt and Sea. Well, the government then went in and shut this off. And Mexico still had their river around here and their water comes up from Mexico, you know, now since we got the aquaduct it doesn't. But it did when we first come in the valley. We got our water up from Mexico.

Y: All American Canal.

C: All American Canal, yes.

Y: So did you get a lot of your produce from the railroad. I mean did it come in and go out?

C: No, we got it from San Bernardino just like our . . .

Mr. Cobb used to go into San Bernardino when we first had a grocery store and get supplies. And he went to Palm Springs, no, for awhile he had to, all during the war, he had to go and get his milk and things like that from the store in San Bernardino. He had a truck and he'd get up real early and then he'd get back in time to open the store up at seven o'clock in the morning so you know he got up way early morning hours.

Y: And he did this in the twenties and thirties?

C: Beg pardon.

Y: He did this in the twenties and thirties?

C: Oh, all through the thirties. Oh, yes. Oh, probably, we didn't do that, I don't think, more than three years, maybe not three years until Palm Springs got big enough that they were bringing in the produce into Palm Springs and then he went into Palm Springs to get his produce and milk and things like that. And it all come down from Banning by that time. And then Cathedral City got big enough, or Palm Springs got big enough, so he got it from Palm Springs. Then pretty soon they started delivering out at Cathedral as time went along. As things progressed, why, then they finally brought the milk and produce and bread and everything like that, groceries until the bread

man came in Cathedral. I don't know how many bread men come in there now. Maybe not more than one or two, I don't know anything about them.

Y: Do you remember whether they come from Banning?

C: Where?

Y: The bread men, did they come from Banning?

C: Oh, L. A. Most of them had a supply house in Banning. And they'd bring the bread out fresh from L. A. of a morning, and then the drivers here that would supply Banning and Beaumont and Cathedral City and Palm Springs and this part down here where they had a wholesale house there where they'd, not wholesale but just a storage place, where the big trucks come out from L. A. and then distribute it to the other trucks that deliver down in this country.

Y: What did you all do to entertain yourselves when you weren't working?

C: Well, I wonder when that was. (laughter)

Y: That's why I phrased it that way.

C: Well, I'll tell you what we used to do. We used to have picnics in the summertime, the weather wasn't too hot we used to have picnics up at Snow Creek, not Snow Creek, White Water River. Picnics up Cathedral Canyon. We used to have a picnic up Cathedral Canyon and some of us would

go to one of the ranches down here where the Wonder Palms is now. Or what do they call it, it isn't Wonder Palms anymore. I lived down it long enough, I ought to remember the name of it. Right due east of Cathedral. We used to some of the stables down there at the ranches. We used to go down there and the ones that would ride horseback, why we'd ride back up into the canyon at night, moonlight night, and the ones that didn't ride horses, why they'd go up there and build a bonfire and take the picnic food up there. And then the ones that would ride horseback, why then we could ride, go horseback, and then we'd ride up the canyon. By the time we got up there they'd have the fire built and we'd roast weiners and sing songs and by then somebody had a guitar and they used to play the guitar and we'd sing and eat and fry hamburgers and things up at the canyon. And then usually I always rode up, but I never rode back, but I'd come home back to Cathedral. There was someone that was up there with a car, helped clean up while Mr. Cobb and whoever else was taking the horses back to the livery stable. They'd take them back to the stable. And then I'd come on and help clean up the camp and then come on back to there and always have fun. We used to just have

lots of fun. We done that, not every week, but probably twice a month. Then they had a moving picture show in Indio. And we used to go down to Indio to the moving picture show long time. Then they finally built this one over here around 111. They built that there on the west side of Cathedral City. I think they had one in Palm Springs before that. Yes, they did. Earl Streeby bought one in Palm Springs, the first one. I don't know whether that's still over on Ramon Road or not.

Y: It does.

C: It's still open, yes.

Y: Do you think that there was a real closeness of community in Cathedral City?

C: Oh yes.

Y: Why?

C: Well, you take the people here. All we had, you might say, in the early days of Cathedral City was us people. It was just the people here. And we had to be very close. They had to be very congenial and very, very friendly. There wasn't too awful much to do. Then we built the town hall. And paid for that by having dinners and suppers and things like that, which was a library. It was, I guess it still, they still use it for a town hall now. And they built that, then they took in enough money

to buy into the library and we'd have a jamboree every year. And the jamboree, why we'd have a big dinner. Feed as many as four hundred. And Mr. Larrison used to bake the beans. We had baked beans and hot dogs and things like that. It was almost like a barbecued dinner. And we'd raise lots of money. Of course, we all got in and worked. Everyone in Cathedral City was very, very close. Of course, after the war, why then things changed. People come in and many people lived here after the war and town built and it wasn't like it was in the early days. I used to know, of course, being in the post office, I knew everybody in town, knew all the children's names and all the dogs' names. The bus used to come out, the lady that run the school bus out in Palm Springs and they always picked the children up in front of the store. There were quite a few children to go to Palm Springs, too, at that time.

Y: What time was this, the forties?

C: Yes, that would be in, yes, that would be in the thirties and forties. Probably more thirties than forties. In the forties they started the school bus, I think, in the forties. And before just a lady picked up the children and took them in Palm Springs. Of course, we've had a

school out here in Cathedral City for years. I don't remember just when the school was built. After we moved out of Cathedral, we moved out to the ranch and lived over there awhile. Then that would be twenty-seven years ago. I wasn't around Cathedral City after that too much.

Y: At that point did you spend more time in Rancho Mirage?

C: Beg pardon.

Y: You said you weren't around Cathedral City at that time. Did you spend more time around Rancho Mirage?

C: No, we were at Tamarsk. We had forty acres on Date Palm Drive. We had lots of grapefruit and dates. Of course, we had that for many years before we built out there, before we built that house that I showed you. That was built out on our ranch.

Y: How long did you maintain the date groves and the grapes?

C: How long did we what?

Y: Maintain them, have them?

C: Oh, I don't know. We planted them years and years ago. But our palm trees now are so high it's almost impossible to pick the dates off of them. I don't know whether they do anything with them or not. I never noticed. I drove by there the other day, oh, it's been about ten days ago or two weeks ago, and I never noticed whether they, what they were doing with the dates. I still have a

mortgage on the property out there. I drive by once in awhile to look the place over and see that they're taking care of it and what they're doing.

Y: You've sold it though.

C: Beg pardon.

Y: You've sold it or you're renting it?

C: No, I sold it, but I hold the mortgage.

Y: I'm just curious why your husband's parents thought to open a store in Cathedral City, and there there were so few people.

C: (laughter) Well, they liked it here. They liked it here. They had the gas station and the grocery store. There wasn't too many people here at that time, but they liked it here, and they had money coming in. Besides that, they didn't have to depend on working a living for ~~anything~~. And . . .

Y: But who came? There wasn't anyone here.

C: Oh, yes, there was. There was people here at that time. You'd be surprised. And in the wintertime there were a lot of places that rented. They rented in the wintertime and people would move out in the summertime. In the summertime, well, it just kept increasing. More people . . . and then when they got refrigeration, why first we had the water coolers, you know, the swamp coolers.

Well, then people stayed in all summer. Then when we got the electric coolers, they put in the cooling systems in the houses, why then people stayed all the year round. So you see that made a big difference.

Y: When you first moved out there, though, you didn't have either, did you?

C: When we come to the desert we had electricity. That's all I had, electricity. And for refrigeration, we went to Palm Springs to get ice. And in our store, in the little store that we had, the grocery store, I used to have to keep my milk and butter in the store in the refrigerator. And as we sold milk and butter and things out of the store, and that was against the law. And I was always scared to death to have a quart of milk opened in there for fear an inspector would come in because that's against the law for anyone to have food that you're using like that in, stored in an out box that you're selling out of. A lot of people don't know that, but we knew it. I knew it. So I was very, very careful never to have much butter or any other milk like that in the refrigerator that I'd been using out of because the inspector told me that, I used to have the post office inspector come down from San Francisco. And one of our

cheese men for Kraft's cheese that we bought all our cheese from, his brother was the post office inspector of San Francisco. And our head office is in Frisco, post office, and so when the brother would come down, he come down every week, come down through this territory, and he'd say, well, Jim's coming down next Thursday, and that would be the post office inspector. So I always knew when the post office inspector was coming in. And so Jim, or he was sick, the delivery man was sick one time and he didn't get to come down and Jim come down, or the inspector come, I don't remember which one of the boys was Jim, but one of them's name was Jim, and so he come, the inspector come in. And he said, well, you didn't know I was coming this time. He said, I'm going to surprise you. I hope everything is all right, and I said, well, you can hope all you want to, but I know they're all right. And I didn't, but I thought, well, there wasn't too much because it's easy to keep up. But by that time I was writing money orders. I had lots of money here, too. Times that I used to have to take it into Palm Springs. They have a bank out here, and if I had any extra or any money to amount to anything, why I had a permit in Riverside County to take it into

Palm Springs and take my gun with me. And I'd take it into the bank in Palm Springs and just deposit there. Leave it there overnight and pick it up in a day or two.

Y: And then what would you do with it? Oh, you would send it on.

C: I would send it to San Francisco. And I had to send cash into San Francisco because I was not writing money orders, and just as soon as I put orders in for them, then I never carried any money after that. We had a bank in Palm Springs and I guess, no, we didn't have a bank in Cathedral City then, but I used to take it into Palm Springs and put it in the bank there.

Y: What bank was it?

C: Bank of America. That was the first bank in Palm Springs until Boyd was manager of the bank there at that time. The bank was very popular in Riverside County. I don't think he does much in work anymore. I don't know. I believe that someone told me that Mr. Boyd is not too well. But, my, he was such a nice man. I've forgotten, too, who the next banker was there. I don't remember that. Now we've built a bank in Cathedral City, and Mr.Cobb and I was very heavy stockholders in that bank and we still have lots of money there. They call it

the Desert Bank now. I still have money in the Desert Bank. Pays well.

Y: That's nice to know a local bank pays well to its local residents.

C: (laughter) Yes, it sure does.

Y: Do you remember much about Palm Desert during the war years when Patton was there?

C: In the Palm Desert, there was not much at Palm Desert, and all that south of the boulevard, there from Pacific Highway, the highway goes up the mountains, what is it seventy-one or two?

Y: Seventy-four.

C: Seventy-four, yes. From seventy-four through the other side, well, that whole section, land would be a mile long there along a hundred and eleventh and south of the border. That was all taken over by the government during the war. And they had a station there and it's where they, now that out in the desert. What did you say, Twenty-nine Palms, the other side of Palm Desert. But anyway . . .

Y: Indian Wells or Rancho Mirage?

C: No, it was way, way, way out towards, way out on the summit out there. I'm going to lose that pen yet.

They had a big army out there, big army base.

Y: Twenty-nine Palms, I think I said.

C: No, no, because at Twenty-nine Palms they had one right out here east of Indio, up Shafer's Summit out on the high land out there. And that was Patton's army was stationed there. And then they had their, all their work was done, their trucks and everything like that was done at a base down in Rancho Mirage, or Palm Desert, Palm Desert. We could have bought that half a section, no, the whole section. Oh, let's see, I think about six hundred and some dollars.

Y: After the war?

C: After the war, when the government wanted us to sell it. But we didn't want it; we didn't want to be bothered with it. We didn't want to invest that much money in something and then just have it lay in the desert.

Y: Do you remember much about King Gillette's estate on the other side on his property?

C: No. You mean the other side of . . .

Y: Where Palm Village started.

C: No, no, not down that far. We didn't own anything down that far.

Y: I was just curious if you remembered anything about Gillette's estate there.

C: Well, Gillette's estate?

Y: The only thing I remember about that is we used to go down there and swim. They had a big tank that they used to irrigate. That used to be all into grapefruit, and it belonged to Gillettes. What company is Gillette? What did they make? What did they do?

C: Breakfast food.

Y: Oh.

C: And they owned all that property down in there. And what did they use to have out? Grapefruit. Lots of grapefruit. That didn't have anything to do with it. But the Gillette Ranch, that was on the north of hundred and eleventh. Yes, on the north. Then on the south, why there was nothing there. There was just a section of land in there. And I don't know who owned that section before the government bought it.

Y: Is there anything in the area of Rancho Mirage?

C: No. Nothing, nothing at all there. Every time we had a big rain, why the water would wash down there and the pavement under that would all be covered with sand. They'd get the scrapers down from Riverside and from the county. I think they were all stationed in Palm Springs.

Take them out and scrape the roads off the inroads so we could get through. Then when we come here, why everything, as I told you before, everything was dirt road excepting that one little strip between us and Indio. And then they finally got a theatre in Indio, and we used to go down to Indio to the movies. And that was quite a treat for us.

Y: How long did it take before, you know, when you first got to Cathedral City, how long did it take you to get to Indio? I imagine that was a good journey.

C: Well, oh, I don't know, you made pretty near as good time as you do now. It was dusty, and you'd keep above your dust. I wouldn't have the slightest idea. It's about, what is it, thirty miles.

Y: Oh, I doubt it's that.

C: I don't believe it's that, is it.

Y: I don't think so. I think it's probably . . .

C: No. I went seventeen.

Y: Yes.

C: Seventeen from Cathedral down there. Yes, that's it. Seventeen miles, as I say, from Cathedral corner, that corner there, to the east end of Cathedral down to Indio. I believe it's seventeen miles. It didn't take too long

to run down there. There was a Mexican cafe down there, the one with the old family, old Mexican family ran. And the grandmother done all the cooking. And could that woman cook. We used to make it a point to go down there practically every week if we could, why we'd go down there and have a Mexican dinner. The best Mexican food I've ever had. I've never had anything like it since. And then when the old lady died, why then the newer generation and kept getting worse and worse and worse, and so we never go down anymore. We haven't for many, many years. But when the original family was there, why they was the nicest Mexican people.

Y: I hear you had some nice restaurants in Cathedral City after awhile.

C: Well, the best restaurant to start with was on the corner where the Jack-in-the-Box is now. And who was the man's name?

Y: Was that Sam Arner? Was that Sam Arner's?

C: I can't remember who run the first restaurant there, but there used to be a restaurant on that corner, and it was a good one. His wife and his wife's sister, the two women done the cooking, and they were from the Scandinavian peninsula, and they were excellent cooks. And he done, oh,

so well. And then, oh, the women got older and they didn't want to work anymore, so then he sold it. I can't think of what the new owner's name was. And then the next ones that went in there that made a success out of it was the Chinese. And then they had a fire, and the original Chinese there, why they never opened up again. It was opened up, I think, but they didn't run it. And it was never good after the original people had it. But while they were there, it was the best Chinese food that we have ever found. It was so clean and everything was so good, and the chicken was always so fresh and everything in there was just simply delicious. But then those things happen. Wheeler was the first man's name that owned the first cafe. And Georgia Cobb, that's Bill Cobb's wife, they lived down at this one. Now Georgia worked for the city of Los Angeles for twenty-five years, and so did Bill. And they both retired now, but Georgia went in with him here. And Bill was running the station for us at that time, the Standard station. So Georgia wanted to go to work, so she went up there to work for Mr. Wheeler. And I forgot what happened. Anyway, he bawled Georgia out for something. He was real overbearing about, she had something in her hand, and it wasn't a tea kettle, I

forgot what it was because it was something that would break, and she dropped it right down on the restaurant floor and just walked out. (laughter) She never went back and she never got her pay. I think it was the second day she worked there. And she never worked in a restaurant before. She didn't know anything about working in the restaurant. And I know her, she has an awful quick temper. She's getting over it, though. As she gets older, why she's learned to control her temper. And I had a lot to do with it because Georgia's found out that she can't lose her temper around me because I won't put up with it. I spanked her one time. Wow, I spanked that kid! She and Bill was just married, Georgia was a little bit of a thing. Now she's like that. But anyway, she was about that big around her waist, just a young kid. Oh, she might have been, oh, I don't know, Georgia was maybe twenty. I've forgotten. Bill wasn't of age. He was twenty, but he wasn't twenty-one yet. But anyway, Bill was running the station for us and Altha May Larrison, the girl that worked for us in the store, I believe that Mr. Cobb was working at the ranch. I'm not sure, but then there was just Altha May and I to take care of the meat market. Mr.Cobb had cut the meat, the counter was full of meat, full of steaks and ground meat and everything

like that, you know, pork chops and all the things and Altha May and I was alone and we had the post office, the grocery part and the meat market to staff. Just the two of us in there until Claude would come home and he usually got home about four o'clock in the evening rush, you know, when people is buying for dinner and such as that. So I had on a uniform, a white uniform and the sleeves come to about there. And every time I'd go by Georgia, she wasn't working, she was just pestering around, she'd snap me with a rubber band. So somebody come into the post office and as I went by, she swatted me with that rubber band. And that gets tiresome, you know, you hit you on your bare arm with a rubber band. So I come back out through the store to help Altha May with something in the meat counter, she snapped me again. So then when I went back into the post office, the meat market was on this end, the post office was on the other end, there was a door open between the grocery store and the post office and we could take care of both of them at one time. And I went back into the office and she hit me with the band. And I said, "Now, listen, Georgia Cobb, if you do that again," I said, "I'm going to take you across my knee." She said, "I'd like to see you try

it." Boy, I grabbed that young lady and surprised her. She lost the rubber band, and I got her by both wrists and I don't remember how I ever got her head in under my arm, but I got her head in under my arm and I bent her over my knee and I spanked that girl right on her little old bottom. I had her down. The more she'd wiggle, the more I'd choke her in my arm. And I made her cry before I let her up. And, oh, but I spanked her, and the more I spanked her, the worse it made my hand feel. And the madder I got, so finally, why Altha May said, "I think you've done enough." So then I let Georgia go, and she said, "I'm going to tell what you done to me, darn you anyway, darn you, darn you." And out the store she went. Well, Altha May said, "Now what do you think is going to happen?" I said, "Well, I know what's happened. I'm good and mad." So Altha May said, "Well, I've seen you get mad before but that's the first time I ever seen you show that you were real mad." So anyway, we worked around the store there and long about three and four o'clock, the school kids hadn't come home yet, so it must have been around about between three or four o'clock, we were not busy. And Georgia wore a straw hat. Well, she come through the house and

she'd come through and into the grocery store. And she was in the door and Altha May nor neither I had seen her, and pretty soon that straw hat come up, flying like that. She'd just, you know, whizzed to the end, and went out in the middle of the store and lit out there. Altha May looked at it and I looked at it, and neither one of us said a word. Georgia said, "Well, my hat's come in." She said, "I stay." Here, that's all that was ever said about the spanking. But she went out and told Bill. But I never know what happened between her and Bill. But anyway, Georgia got all over her mad and that was the only time Georgia Cobb and I have ever had a word. We didn't have any words then, only she discovered spanking. But she learned she could not run over me. She learned her lesson right then and there. And I just think the world of her.

Y: Are you related?

C: Beg pardon.

Y: Are you related?

C: Oh, no, no, no, she just married Bill Cobb and I married Claude Cobb. No, we're no relation, just sister-in-laws is all. I think the world of her. My, she speaks a lot of me. We have so much fun when we're together. I'd do

anything in the world for her. What did I do for her the last thing? Oh, I bought her a set of dishes, a beautiful set of bone china imported from England for her this last Christmas. And then for Bill, I bought him a new pool table, paid seven hundred and sixty dollars for a new pool table. They have a game room in their home. They live down in Vista now. And they have this basement in their house and he had a cheap pool hall in his pockets, you know, where the balls go in. That was getting that material was getting worn, some of it was torn, so for Christmas I bought Georgia the set of dishes and Bill a new pool table. And, oh, they were sure tickled. Georgia would do anything in the world for me. I think so much of her. But we've never had a word, nothing at all, since I spanked her. (laughter)

Y: Why do you think people move to Cathedral City as opposed to moving to say, Palm Springs? What was the attraction of Cathedral City?

C: We come here to make a living.

Y: Well, what about other people?

C: Other people? Well, the same thing. The same thing. Until people got to coming here because it was a nice place to live. They built their homes here.

Y: What about Palm Springs? Why weren't people going to Palm Springs?

C: Real estate cost too much. When real estate in Palm Springs started to go, why real estate goes up. Real fast in Palm Springs and you couldn't buy anything unless you go clear out. And then you'd get way out and you might not have water or electricity. But people come to Cathedral City to build their homes here because they like the desert. Then, of course, a lot of them come here and go into business. There's a man in Cathedral City now by the name of Sam Arner. He owns property there in Cathedral City, owns several lots. And there's quite a few business houses, a lot of his property. And he's a nut. His father bought him out, but the family was a very, very, very wealthy family, and they lived in Pennsylvania. And Sam was always in trouble, always having trouble, getting into trouble of his own making. And he's the same way after, as he grew up in California or Cathedral. And his father came out from Pennsylvania, and I met him; he come out to the post office and he said that he had a son who wanted to locate him in Cathedral City. And he said that he's mentally retarded in a way, but he said, in his way, he's smart, he's just too smart,

he's oversmart. And he said, he causes too much trouble back here in the family and we want to get him out where he will have a chance. He will never have a chance in Pennsylvania. That's the old man's story. I like Mr. Arner. I like the old gentleman real well. But anyway, he sent Sam out. And that's how he come there, but he's always been in trouble. Always been in trouble. They wanted education they wanted to do, why he'd try and get up a petition to, like when we built the town hall, why he tried to get a petition and signers and people that would vote against it to take the money out of the Chamber of Commerce to vote, you know, to build the town hall. And he's always against everything. Anything they try to do out there, why he always has . . . to this day, why if I read, every once in a while I get a Desert Sun and read it, and you'll see something in there about Sam Arner. When I have so many people, friends, in Cathedral City and they tell me about him, that he's still there. You see that picture? That picture there. Do you know who that is? That's the Desert Smoketree.

Y: I've never seen it so blue.

C: The blue purple. That's the Smoketree. Now they used to

be all over the desert.

Y: Yes.

C: You know around here. Now that was painted by Agnes ~~Kelson~~ Kelton, she was an artist from New York City and she contracted tuberculosis and she come to the desert for her health. And now it was a hundred and ten the day when Agnes Kelton did that picture. Now that color is absolutely the color of the bottom of Smoketree. The tree was in bloom and she mixed her paint by that color, by the blossom of the smoketree so that it absolutely, and it's never faded. I've had it probably for, I think I've had it for over twenty years and it's just as pretty now as it was the day that Agnes painted it. Most of her pictures were desert scenes and I loved solace desert scenes in a picture down at, I was over at Twenty-nine Palms, Sunday we were over there in the evening in a restaurant and I saw a desert picture. It would be similar to that without the smoketree. It was completely a desert scene and I said, "Well, whoever painted that, I don't know who painted it, but it certainly isn't an Agnes Kelton picture because that man didn't have a depth to it. Now those are those hills north of here, and they're so natural. They're so natural at this time

of the day. They look real low and they look at quite a distance. I see them when they look just exactly like that. And on a hot summer day it just seems to me, now when I was over at the ranch, that picture was out on a north wall and I had a lot of south windows in my living room there. And on an afternoon it just seemed to me that I could feel the sun bearing down on my neck looking at that picture. Mr. Cobb used to laugh at me and he'd tell me I was just, well, the picture was having an effect on me. Used to kid me a lot about it, but it just seemed to me like I could feel the heat. Now here, I don't feel the heat at all because the light is different. But out there when the light hit it. I have another picture up there with a bunch of dates. I don't care too much for it because I've seen so many dates, but I do like that picture.

Y: What kind of dates did you grow?

C: Oh, let's see, we had They had three different kinds. We had two of the soft dates and then we had two of the The is the one that's used most commercially. And they ship better. They're not as soft and sweet and mushy as the other dates are. Used to be lots of work.

Y: Did you have lots of help?

C: Nope. Mr. Cobb had Mexicans working for him on the ranch and during the date time either picking dates or covering the date bunches or pollinating or anything like that. He always had lots of Mexicans working for him. And I always had somebody working with me at the house. I had a housekeeper. I had one housekeeper for twenty years. And then she was quite old and she had arthritis badly and she come to the desert to see if it would work and it did help her a great deal. And then her daughter retired from teaching. The daughter was home and she was not well, so Ruby went home to live with her daughter because she could help her daughter. And then she outlived her daughter.

Y: Well, I think we've covered an enormous amount.

C: Yes.

Y: I think, I don't want to keep you too long.

C: Mr. and Mrs. Cobb are both dead. And the Allen family is dead. The Crumpleton family is dead. The Reach family is dead. Mr. Martin has been dead for years. Oh, I could just name, oh, so many, many, many. Agnes Kelton is dead. And nearly every . . . Mr. Cobb and I are the

last ones of the early settlers in Cathedral City. Mrs. Day died not too long ago, sometime in the last three years. She was an oldtimer. She used to run a art shop and book store in Palm Springs for years and then she retired and moved out here. She had a home out here. She lived alone until she had to have someone with her. And in later years I'd come up, you know, And I don't know anyone else. Robert Hillery, now Robert came, he and his brother came here when he was four years old. And I think that was in around the early thirties. And Robert and I are the only ones that's left.

Y: Where is Robert?

C: Well, he lives in here, Cathedral City. Let's see, who are you with?

Y: Palm Desert Historical Society.

C: Have you ever met Robert?

Y: No.

C: Let me give you his number.

Y: Okay.

C: It is. And when he walks he doesn't have that spring like we have. We do our springing with our foot.

Y: This is Robert Hillery?

C: Yes. And he can't use this muscle here. He was born that way. And so naturally he walks funny. So when he was in the army, they found out, he said, well, it was his natural walk and he couldn't change it. And they said, that's all right, boy, you're in the army and we'll change it for you. Well, they found out they couldn't after torturing him for a long time trying to make him walk differently. When he couldn't finally, a doctor got a hold of him and he said, well, that man can't walk any different because that muscle back there don't give. And he walks very, very funny, but, oh, he's such a nice young chap. And his wife is a school teacher. She taught in school in Palm Springs for twenty-five years. Nadine, I think the world of her. She's such a sweet, oh, such a nice person. And, of course, I just love Robert like he's my own almost.

Y: Did you have any children?

C: No. No, we never had children.

Y: But Robert then was a product of Palm Springs schools.

C: Yes, yes. He graduated from Palm Springs schools and he went to Riverside to junior college. And then he's went to, oh, some other college. He's had two years of junior and four years at senior college, so he's very,

very highly educated and a very, very smart boy. He takes care of all my stuff, all my estate, which I was surprised and so was his after my husband died.